REMARKS

Claims 1-17 have been examined and have been rejected on prior art grounds. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 2-4 and 11-13 without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1, 5-10 and 14-17 will be all the claims pending in the present application.

I.   Formal Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for initialing and returning the PTO SB/08 Form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement of October 23, 2003, indicating that the documents cited therein have been considered. However, the Examiner has not indicated acceptance of the drawings filed on October 23, 2003, nor has the Examiner acknowledged the foreign priority claim and receipt of the priority document. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner indicate acceptance of the drawings and acknowledge the foreign priority claim and receipt of the priority document.

II.   Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 7,158,946 to Sato et al. ("Sato")

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Sato. The subject matter of claims 2-4 and 11-13 have been incorporated into claims 1 and 10, respectively. Since claims 2-4 and 11-13 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Applicant submits that the rejection of such claims is now moot.

A.   Claims 1 and 10

Amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

> an information acquisition module that acquires accounting information which is stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge, the accounting information including cartridge information which includes reuse information regarding reuse of a main body and components of said recording agent cartridge with regard to said recording agent cartridge and image formation information with regard to image formation carried out by said image formation device with the recording agent from said recording agent cartridge; and
> a charge computation module that computes a charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in frequency of reuse with regard to the main body of said recording agent cartridge or with an increase in number of reused components among all the components of said recording agent cartridge, based on the acquired cartridge information which includes reuse information and image formation information.

Applicant respectfully submits that Sato fails to teach all of the features of claim 1. For example, Sato merely teaches that a cartridge "has identification data such as an ID representing the cartridge type or a serial number to uniquely identify the cartridge, it can be checked whether the cartridge has been exchanged." *See* Sato at col. 22, lines 28-35. Sato further teaches the identification data is used to prevent illicit use of the cartridge by checking whether the cartridge was delivered by a printing count charge scheme agreement. *See* Sato at col. 22, lines 31-34. The identification data can also be used to manage the cycle of reuse/recycle. *See* Sato at col. 22, lines 34-35.

However, although Sato may teach that the identification data of a cartridge can be used to manage the cycle of reuse or recycle, there is no teaching that the system of Sato computes a charge based in any way on the cycle of reuse or recycle. Further, Sato fails to specifically teach

that the charge decreases "with an increase in frequency of reuse with regard to the main body of said recording agent cartridge or with an increase in number of reused components of said recording agent cartridge." Rather, Sato teaches that "the service center bills the user of the printer a charge corresponding to the data related to the number of printed paper sheets supplied through the remote communication means and supplies to the user a new cartridge to be attached in place of the cartridge in the printer on the basis of the data related to the remaining toner amount basically without billing the user the charge." *See* Sato at col. 21, lines 38-52. In other words, Sato describes a system that allows a user to be charged based on the number of sheets printed or the amount of toner used, and can supply a new toner to the user as needed, based on the toner information stored on the toner cartridge. *See* Sato at col. 22, lines 5-41. The system taught by Sato fails to take into account the frequency of reuse and number of reused components among all the components of the recording cartridge, when computing a charge to be charged to a user.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over Sato for at least the foregoing reasons. Since claim 10 recites features similar to those discussed above in conjunction with claim 1, Applicant submits that it is patentable over Sato for at least reasons similar to those set forth above with regard to claim 1.

B.   Claims 5-9 and 14-17

Since claims 5-9 are dependent upon claim 1, and since claims 14-17 are dependent upon claim 10, Applicant submits that such claims are patentable over Sato at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

III.   Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

/Kelly G. Hyndman 39,234/

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC   Kelly G. Hyndman
Telephone: (202) 293-7060   Registration No. 39,234
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

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